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SOURCE (A) US citizen, specialist in Central Asian history, who attended the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists at Cambridge, UK, 21-28 Aug 54.

Although he considers himself primarily an historian, he has done considerable work in anthropology and philology with particular reference to Central Asian tribal groups. In addition to his knowledge of Central and East Asian languages, he speaks Persian, Turkish, French, German, and some Russian.

(B) Professor of Semitic languages and literature at a large US university, who attended the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists at Cambridge, UK, 21-28 Aug 54.

He speaks Near Eastern and West European languages, but not Russian.

Collector's Note: The two sources were interrogated separately and it was not possible to reconcile discrepancies in their reports.

SOURCE (A)

1. It has been a tradition since the middle of the 19th century to convene a congress of orientalist from all parts of the world every three years for purposes of academic and scholarly exchange. For the most part, these congresses have been held in various parts of Europe. Thus the 21st in 1948 and 23rd in 1954, held respectively in Paris and Cambridge, remained true to this tradition. The 22nd Congress in 1951, however, was held in Istanbul, Turkey, after the congress had been formally invited by the Turkish Government to convene there. Though Istanbul technically is a part of Europe, historically it is a part of the Orient. The 24th Congress will convene in a city in Western Germany. Therefore, it is apparent that the Congress tradition of meeting only in Europe is being upheld.
2. I had the privilege of attending both the Istanbul and Cambridge Congresses, and of giving a paper at the last Congress. Both Congresses were highly successful, but for different reasons. The Istanbul Congress was chiefly successful because of the contact it established between Turkish and foreign scholars. Since the secularization of Turkey, much great work has been done in that country in the field of Oriental studies. However, it was not until the Istanbul Congress that these contributions became known to the world of orientalist as a whole. The

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Congress was made even more successful by the efforts of the Turkish Government to arrange excursions and exhibits of manuscripts and antiquities for the visiting scholars.

3. The Cambridge Congress, however, was successful for different reasons. As was the case in the Istanbul Congress, the British authorities, like the Turkish government, strove to make available to the visiting delegates all available facilities and repositories. Moreover, for the first time in the recent history of the Congresses, 21 delegates from the USSR attended. For the first time, foreign scholars had the opportunity to talk directly to Soviet scholars whose contributions were known to them hitherto only through books.
4. Since the Congresses are non-political, invitations are sent out to all reputable orientalist regardless of nationality and political affiliation. In 1961, the Turkish Government sent invitations to delegates residing in Iron Curtain countries. None came, however. Similarly, invitations were this time sent out to delegates in Iron Curtain countries and in Red China. Acceptances were forthcoming from most of these countries including Red China. However, only Soviet and Polish delegates actually turned up. The presence of the large Soviet delegation created quite a stir among the delegates. In his opening address to the convocation, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge spoke with fervor about the beginning of a new age of friendship and exchange, and was warmly applauded. Zeki Velidi Togan of Turkey, president of the 22nd Congress, addressed the Congress in his capacity as former President. Since Zeki Bey is an old anti-Bolshevik (President of the first Bashkir Republic and Turk nationalist), an undertone of bitterness lay in his words because of the fervent attention granted the Soviet delegates. This he also expressed privately to me on repeated occasions.
5. Next, Academician AA Guber, chief of the Soviet delegation, was invited to address the Congress. He spoke in Russian and afterwards translated his talk into English himself. All Soviet delegates subsequently spoke in Russian, an apparent attempt to gain recognition for the Russian language as an official international language along with English, French, and German. Guber spoke in generalities about peace and exchange and was warmly applauded. The last address was given by Claude Scheffer, chief of the French delegation. Scheffer was once a German U-boat captain in the first World War, who has since become a French citizen. He too emphasized the presence of the Soviet delegation.
6. The Soviet delegation seemed to fall into three categories:
 - (a) The scholars - all Russian
 - (b) The minority representatives (Uzbek, Turkmen etc) - probably trusted Communists and certainly not scholars, brought along for propaganda purposes.
 - (c) The MVD men.

The lectures were given by members of categories "a" or "b".

The scholars, as a whole, gave excellent lectures which were warmly received. The lecture by IM Dyakonov on Parthian archives discovered in Central Asia created a small sensation and was probably the outstanding contribution of the Soviets.

EE Bertels, who gave a good lecture on Turkmen poetry, is now an old man, the dean of Soviet Iranian scholars. He is a well respected scholar for his work in literature and philology. He was friendly, and spoke relatively freely in German on non-political subjects.

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9. LP Potapov, one of the leading Soviet historians of the Altaic region, read an excellent paper on various aspects of Central Asian problems. He was very friendly and proved to be the most charming, intelligent, and mobile of the USSR delegation. It was somewhat surprising to see him so friendly with a World War II DP, Omeljan Pritsak, a Ukrainian refugee from Lwow who is now at the Center of Oriental Studies of Hamburg University.
10. AA Guber, head of the delegation, gave a paper on the Philippine Republic of 1898, which was bitterly anti-US, and the only sour note among the scholarly papers.
11. The lectures given by category "c" delegates such as NT Saurantayev on the formation of the Kazakh nation, and KM Kuliyev on Turkmen culture, were apparently propaganda lectures designed to convince the delegates how good conditions were in the subject regions. They were obviously not scholars because they could not answer questions. Except for the violent reaction of old anti-Bolsheviks like Zeki Bey, the reactions of the audience were indifferent.
12. The MVD men did not lecture, but merely observed and often acted as interpreters. One in particular, Vassilevsky, was quite charming and did his best not to be too conspicuous.
13. Members of the Soviet delegation were quartered in the colleges among the other delegates. Although they lived separately, they tended to dine together en masse. Once when I seated myself opposite Delegate EF Kovalyov at an early breakfast, I was subsequently surrounded by the mass of Soviet delegates who trooped in together for breakfast. The atmosphere was strained, but was broken eventually by the friendly and witty Potapov. Kovalyov, whose field is modern Chinese literature, is quite young and limps very badly, possibly from a war wound. He was reserved, but friendly. Our conversation was limited by my spoken Russian because he spoke no Western language.
14. During two days of the Congress, the Soviet delegation showed four films about life in certain Soviet Republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan). The auditorium was filled to overflowing by curious delegates. However, the films were ridiculously blatant propaganda (all smiling people and bumper crops), which aroused a certain amount of disapproval on the part of many delegates. The chief criticism was that the Soviets should have shown some scientific film, e.g. a film about the excavations in Central Asia. It was a propaganda blunder, counteracting the favorable impression made by the scholarly papers.
15. During a session of the SOCIETAS URAL-ALTAICA, which has its headquarters in West Germany, Omeljan Pritsak proposed to the Soviet delegation that they join. Potapov, answering in Russian in the name of the Soviet delegation, indicated that the matter had to be taken up first in Moscow. This fact, plus the fact that all the lectures of the Soviet delegation had been prepared and printed in Moscow beforehand, indicates that the Soviet delegation was not given a free hand to mingle and associate as is the case with Western delegates. However, in private conversation, they did reveal some information. Potapov told me that a book had been printed in the USSR about the Hazara and Aimaq peoples in Soviet territory, and Bertels told me that little direct contact existed between Soviet scholars and Mongolian scholars at Ulan Bator.

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16. During a discussion, entitled "Orientalism and History," presided over by Prof Denis Sinor of Cambridge, and attended by several hundred people, the Soviet delegation participated rather vehemently. They made two major points: (1) history was the basic object of orientalism, ie the discovery of the laws of history, and (2) orientalism must be related to modern problems in Asia (an attack on ivory-towerism). The non-Soviet contributions, unfortunately, degenerated into academic and philological squabbles, and the effect produced by this session, which was to discuss some basic relations between orientalism and history, was not too favorable.
17. The Soviet delegates attended parties and mixed freely with the crowd. Kovalyov and another Soviet delegate once attended a cocktail party at the home of Mr EC Pullyblank, head of the Department of Sinology at Cambridge. They were friendly and courteous.
18. The over-all impression made by the Soviet delegates was favorable. People expected much worse, and were not surprised when certain unpleasantness arose. The Soviets indicated acceptance of invitations to the 1967 Congress. Their exhibition of books (arranged by Collett's Book Shop) which also had a display of Chinese Communist ^{books}, produced many interested onlookers and customers. They were reasonably free in their personal contacts, and reasonably willing to impart some scholarly information. However, there was no evidence whatsoever that any one of the delegates had the power to make decisions in the name of the delegation as a whole, or to make future commitments.
19. The above Soviet participation, in my opinion, indicates a new Soviet policy of attempting to acquaint foreign scholars with their scholarly achievements. Exchange of students was one of the subjects informally discussed in Cambridge, and it seems obvious that the British and French, in particular, were most interested. One can expect increased Soviet participation in international scientific congresses, and eventually even congresses held in Moscow to which foreign delegations will be invited, and perhaps, even the rise of some kind of research and student exchange program between the USSR and Western Europe.
20. The only Sateellite delegation was from Poland, although others had been invited and the Hungarians and Czechs had indicated that they would come. The only Polish delegate I conversed with was Jablonski, a Sinologist and author of a recent book about Chuang-tzu. Jablonski seemed to have no contact at all with the Soviet delegation, and was eager to converse and associate with his Western colleagues. He indicated repeatedly that little contact existed between Polish and Soviet orientalist. When I expressed my envy of his access to the wealth of Soviet materials on Central Asia, he said that it was not so; that it was impossible for him to get to Moscow. * WITOLD JABLONSKI
21. Turkish and German representation was excellent, and a small, but good, Japanese delegation also attended. The UK was represented by the cream of its orientalist, who did not have far to travel.
22. In spite of the good representation described above, there were significant gaps. Communist Chinese scholars had been invited but they refused to come when it was learned that two or three Chinese from Formosa would attend. Arab scholars declined to accept their invitations because Israeli scholars were also invited.

23. The US representation was too small to make much of an impression, and its personnel were treated as individuals rather than as a delegation because there was no "official delegation." The whole subject of orientalism and orientologists in the US was somewhat neglected, precisely because of the lack of a "delegation". It would have helped to have had a display of US publications in the field. Because of the long absence of the Soviets from this organization, and the genuine curiosity of all orientologists about what the Soviets are doing, their large, competent, and well organized delegation stole the show.

SOURCE (B)

24. I had previously attended meetings of the International Congress of Orientalists at Rome and Leiden before World War II and at Paris since, but the 23rd Congress, which met at Cambridge in August 1954 impressed me as having the broadest international representation and the highest level of scholarship yet attained. The entire Congress was conducted in a very scholarly atmosphere, and there were no apparent ideological, racial, religious, or national tensions. Members of the Congress were treated as individual scholars, without regard to race, religion, nationality or political belief. Frenchmen talked with Germans, Arabs with Israelis, and everyone seemed eager to learn what the Soviets had to say. Even the printed list of members listed all persons in alphabetical order without indicating country or other affiliation.
25. The large Soviet delegation was generally welcomed by the Congress membership whose attitude was one of satisfaction at the participation of scholars from the USSR after so long an absence. There was a general feeling that the Soviets, with access to certain archives and other materials not available to the outside world, were doing research which might be important to orientalism in general, and everyone was eager to learn as much as possible about what they were doing.
26. Among the papers presented by the Soviets were the following:
- (a) Egyptology
VI Avdiev - "Egypt's Relations with Neighboring Countries in the Fourth Millennium BC."
 - (b) Iranian, Armenian, and Central Asian Studies.
IM Dyakonov - "Parthian documents from Nisa."
ST Ersmayan - "The Fall of Slave-owning Society and the Birth of Feudal Society in Ancient Armenia."
 - (c) Altai Studies
EE Bertels - "Studies in Turkmen Literature in the USSR"
EM Kuliyev - "The Cultural Development of Turkmenia"
MT Sauranbayev - "Formation of the Kazakh Nation"
LP Potapov - "Basic Problems of Altai Studies in the USSR"
AN Kononov - "Turcology in the USSR"
 - (d) Indian Studies
AM Dyakov - "Sinology in the USSR"
EM Khubov - "The Formation of the Japanese Centralized Feudal State, Hideyoshi"
AA Guber - "The Philippine Republic of 1898"

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(f) Islamic Studies

BA Belyayev - "Economic Structure of the Caliphate in the Eleventh Century"
 GN Ilyinski - "The Agrarian Structure of Iran by 1900"
 MY Yuldashev - "The State Archives of Khiva".

(g) Christian Orient

NV Pigulevskaya - "The 9th Century Graeco - Syriac - Arabic Manuscript
 Psalter"

(h) African Studies

II Potyakhin - "Formation of African Nations"

27. From the titles listed above it is possible to learn something of the breadth and direction of Soviet studies in orientalism, and when the papers are published in the Congress volume which usually appears about a year later, a better estimate of their quality can be judged. The most important contribution of the Soviets was Yuldashev's description of the state archives of Khiva. This collection contains Persian and Arabic manuscripts of great value which have not been accessible to Western scholars. Although the Soviet scholars insisted upon reading their papers in Russian, they came prepared to distribute printed copies of their papers in Western languages. Belyayev, the only one with whom I had direct contact, participated in discussions in French, and seemed to have good training and background in Islamic studies. I was unable to learn anything of his affiliations, except that he is in Moscow.
28. Everyone seemed amazed that the Soviets mixed so freely with the Western scholars. Most of them appeared able to speak some French at least, and seemed to go out of their way to be friendly. Guber acted as spokesman for the USSR group.
29. Among the Satellites, Poland and East Germany, at least, were represented. An East German scholar, O Eissfeldt, from Halle, read a paper on a biblical subject.
30. In previous Congresses, there had always been two or three invitations from countries desiring to be host for the next congress, but when the locale for the 24th Congress in 1957 came up for discussion, the only invitation was from West Germany. This was rather surprising, not only because it was the only invitation, but because many members felt it was a little too soon after the war for Germany to be issuing an invitation. The invitation, however, was accepted without official dissent. Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Munich were all mentioned as possible host cities.

On file in CIA Library (as "micro-misc. #1037") is a photocopy of:

23 International Congress of Orientalists
 General Programme
 Cambridge 21-28 August 1954. 35 pp.

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